



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

COLUMBUS GANG LEADER APPREHENDED

Database instrumental in identifying El Salvadoran to police, federal agents

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Columbus police and federal officers have determined a man arrested Dec. 23 after a minor traffic accident here is actually a violent, previously deported felon gang leader who had been convicted of assault with a deadly weapon and for participating in a drive-by shooting in Nevada.

Nelson Flores, a 34-year-old citizen of El Salvador who goes by the nickname "El Mula" ("The Mule") and the alias "David Aguilar," was identified as having been deported by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement when the Columbus officer requested assistance in identifying him through the ICE's Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC).

The LESC is a national enforcement operations center that provides local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies with real-time immigration status and identity information on aliens suspected, arrested, or convicted of criminal activity, 24 hours day, 365 days a year. Each day, the LESC responds to approximately 1, 800 first responder inquiries. The LESC, located in Vermont, is home to eight Department of Homeland Security databases that are used by law enforcement nationwide to accurately identify known aliens.

ICE agents identified Flores and placed a detainer upon him that enabled the officer to lawfully detain him. At the same time, Columbus ICE agents were instructed to respond and arrest Flores.

On Tuesday, the Columbus Police Strategic Response Bureau / Gang Unit confirmed that Flores is also the local leader of a violent Salvadoran gang that is active in Columbus.

Under law, criminal aliens are subject to immediate arrest and removal from the United States and violent aliens such as Flores are the highest priority of ICE's Office of Detention and Removal because of the public safety threat.

"This case is a good example of how federal and local law enforcement work together daily in the interest of public safety," said ICE Detroit Special Agent-in-Charge Brian M. Moskowitz. "By working with our law enforcement partners, we were able to identify and arrest a violent felon and protect the public."

Reentry into the United States after being deported is a felony that carries a possible 25 year prison sentence, and ICE has referred the case the U.S. Attorney for prosecution. Flores is scheduled to appear before a federal magistrate at the U.S. District Court here at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday.

Note: "El Mula" is grammatically incorrect slang Spanish.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.